

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
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FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2214

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

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E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN PGOV EFIS ENRG PBOR PLOS

SUBJECT: ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS AND
EASTERN CANADIAN PREMIERS

REF: 77 HALIFAX A-20

1. SIXTH ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS AND EASTERN CANADIAN
PREMIERS CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE AT MOUNTAIN VIEW HOUSE,
WHITEFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, JUNE 11-13, 1978. PRESENT WERE
ALL INVITED GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS WITH USUAL EXCEPTION
OF NFLD'S PREMIER, FRANK MOORES, WHO HAS YET TO GRACE
ONE OF THESE CONFERENCES WITH HIS PRESENCE. HE SENT
HIS INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, BILL DOODY.

2. AS IS USUAL, MUCH IF NOT MOST OF THE USEFUL WORK
OF THE PRINCIPALS AND THEIR ENTOURAGES WAS DONE IN THE
COURSE OF WORKING BREAKFASTS AND DINNERS, IN THE LOUNGES,
AND ON THE GOLF COURSE AND TENNIS COURTS. QUEBEC'S RENE
LEVESQUE ADMITTED THAT HIS PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE
CONFERENCE HAD BEEN ERRONEOUS. THE CONFERENCE, HE
INDICATED, WAS "CONTRARY TO WHAT WE EXPECTED...WE FELT
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IT WOULD BE MOSTLY A PARLOR-LIKE SOCIAL GET-TOGETHER.
...IT WAS THAT, BUT IT WAS USEFUL."

3. ENERGY AND FISHERIES WERE THE PRIME TOPICS OF
DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING, WITH SUCH ITEMS AS TOURISM,
QUEBEC'S NEW AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE PLAN, REGULATION OF
TRUCKING, AND THE SPRUCE BUDWORM RECEIVING SECONDARY

ATTENTION. THE ENERGY RESOLUTIONS (ALL OF WHICH WERE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY) WERE THE RESULTS OF AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY WORKSHOP HELD IN BOSTON IN APRIL. THEY CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENERGY INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM, THE SETTING UP OF A WIND POWER ENERGY TEST CENTER IN PEI, AND A DESIGN COMPETITION FOR AN ENERGY EFFICIENT SOLAR-HEATED HOME IN THE MODERATE PRICE BRACKET. THE PREMIERS AND GOVERNORS INTEND TO APPROACH THEIR RESPECTIVE FEDERAL GOVTS TO PARTICIPATE IN COST SHARING, WHICH MIGHT AMOUNT TO APPROX DOLS 200,000 FOR THE THREE PROJECTS.

4. MAINE GOVERNOR JAMES LONGLEY PUT FORWARD A PROPOSED RESOLUTION URGING FLEXIBLE AND COOPERATIVE ENERGY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN CANADA AND THE U.S. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, LONGLEY'S PROPOSED RESOLUTION INCLUDED A JAB AT THE USG IN THE FORM OF A CAUSTIC INVITATION FOR IT TO BECOME A PART OF THE ENERGY SOLUTION AND NOT JUST PART OF THE PROBLEM. VERMONT'S GOVERNOR SNELLING AND NOVA SCOTIA'S PREMIER REGAN WERE BOTH UNHAPPY WITH WHAT SEEMED TO THEM TO BE A GRATUITOUS AND UNREWARDING DIG AT THE USG AND, WITH THE SILENT BUT APPARENTLY-CONCURRING MAJORITY OF PREMIERS AND GOVERNORS, PREVAILED UPON LONGLEY TO REMOVE THE OFFENDING WORDS. QUEBEC'S LEVESQUE PROPOSED AND RECEIVED CONSENT

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TO ADD WORDS TO LONGLEY'S RESOLUTION CALLING FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON OIL SUPPLY AND PROCESSING, AND ELECTRICAL ENERGY.

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5. LEVESQUE'S INTERPOSITION WAS IN LINE WITH A RESOLUTION OF HIS OWN WHICH HE HAD INTRODUCED EARLIER (AND WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY) CALLING UPON THE GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS TO PRESSURE THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TO PERMIT EXCESS OIL REFINING CAPACITY IN QUEBEC AND THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES TO BE USED TO PRODUCE REFINED PRODUCTS FOR NEW ENGLAND. HE STATED HE REALIZED THAT THERE ARE OBSTACLES TO THE NORTH-SOUTH FLOW WHICH "SEEMS TO BE LOGICALLY INDICATED-- OBSTACLES WHICH LIE MAINLY IN VARIOUS LOBBIES AND CORPORATE POLICIES.

"YET ISN'T THERE ENOUGH COMBINED POLITICAL WEIGHT REPRESENTED HERE, SO THAT, IF IT DOES MAKE SENSE, WE SHOULD AT LEAST GIVE IT A SOLID TRY WITH SOME CONFIDENCE?
...IN THE ENERGY SECTOR, AS ELSEWHERE, AND MAYBE MORE THAN IN ANY OTHER FIELD, THE ADVANTAGES OF COOPERATION CAN BE ENORMOUS, IF WE CAN REALLY MAKE A START AT REALIZING THEM."

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6. ALL OF THE GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS SEEMED STRONGLY TO AGREE WITH LEVESQUE'S REMARKS. REGAN OF NOVA SCOTIA NOTED THAT ATLANTIC CANADA'S REFINERIES HAD BEEN BUILT ON THE ASSUMPTION OF ACCESS TO THE US MARKET BUT HAD LOST THAT MARKET WHEN THE USG ESTABLISHED A POLICY LIMITING CANADIAN EXPORTS. GARRAHY OF RHODE ISLAND NOTED THAT INSUFFICIENT EMPHASIS HAD HERETOFORE BEEN PUT ON ENERGY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IN NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA. THE CONFERENCE HOST, THOMSON OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, SAID THAT, UNTIL NEW ENGLAND ACHIEVES ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, IT MAKES SENSE TO BUY FROM ITS CANADIAN NEIGHBOR RATHER THAN CONTINUING TO DEPEND ON FOREIGN OFFSHORE IMPORTS.

7. LEVESQUE ALSO DISCUSSED THE USE OF ENERGY WITHIN QUEBEC (WHICH HE SAID WAS THE HIGHEST, PER CAPITA, IN THE WORLD) AND SAID HIS GOVT WOULD ISSUE AN ENERGY WHITE PAPER BEFORE THE END OF JUNE WHICH WOULD PROMOTE

CONSERVATION. WITH RESPECT TO ELECTRICITY GENERATION, LEVESQUE MENTIONED HIS PROVINCE'S HYDRO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND POTENTIALITIES, AND STATED THAT QUEBEC HAS SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION TO SELL SURPLUS POWER AT THE RATE OF MORE THAN 10 BILLION KWH PER YEAR BY 1983. A STUDY IS ALSO UNDERWAY TO DETERMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF STRENGTHENING THE ONTARIO-QUEBEC GRID AND EXTENDING IT INTO THE ATLANTIC REGION.

8. ON FISHERIES, THE CONFEREES APPROVED A SORT OF MOTHER HUBBARD MOTION WHICH COVERS EVERYTHING AND TOUCHES NOTHING. THEY PLEDGED TO COOPERATE WITH THEIR FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS IN RESOLVING THE FISHERIES DISPUTE AND PROMISED TO WORK TOWARD LONG-RANGE PROGRAMS AND SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS TO IMMEDIATE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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LONG-RANGE FISHERIES PROBLEMS.

9. COMMENT: AS EVERYONE KNEW WOULD BE THE CASE, RENE LEVESQUE WAS THE STAR OF THE SHOW. WHEN HE PREPARED TO SPEAK, TV LIGHTS SNAPPED ON. WHEN HE FINISHED, THE LIGHTS WENT OUT--AMID CONSIDERABLE LAUGHTER FROM EVERYONE PRESENT. HE WAS CORDIAL AND CHARMING AND EVEN AGREED TO HOST NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE IN HIS PROVINCE. HIS REMARKS ON ENERGY COOPERATION WITHIN THE REGION WERE GIVEN A GOOD RECEPTION AND NO ONE SEEMED TO NOTICE OR TO COMMENT ON THE STONY SILENCE OF NFLD'S BILL DOODY WHEN LEVESQUE MADE HIS PITCH IN FAVOR OF ENERGY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION. DOODY MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING TO HIMSELF THAT WHOEVER SUPS WITH RENE LEVESQUE HAD BETTER HAVE A LONG SPOON. END COMMENT.
MOORE

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